

FWP R2 CAC Meeting

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, March 10, 2010
LOCATION: FWP Region 2 Headquarters, Missoula
TIME: 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

In Attendance:

Members: Tim Aldrich, Janet Bennett, Louie Bouma, Edward Hebbe III, Dudley Improta, Charlie Johnson, Rich Lane, John Manley, Pat O'Herren, Jim Olson, Jack Reneau, Ray Rugg, Stephanie Strickland, Jaala Wickman

Staff: Lee Bastian, Chet Crowser, Loren Flynn, Mack Long, Jeff Darrah, Mike Thompson, Pat Saffel and Ginny Schmautz

Opening: Lee introduces the evening's agenda, as well as Loren and Chet to help him talk about Parks.

First topic: R2 State Parks Program (Lee's Powerpoint)

- There is an acquisition going to the Land Management Commission Thursday, March 18 to add another state park (making for a total of 55 parks statewide and 11 in R2 if it passes).
- Lee gave some background and examples of types of state parks. They included:
 - o Recreation Parks – Frenchtown Pond Development, Beavertail Hill
 - o Natural Parks – Lost creek
 - o Cultural/Historical Parks – Anaconda Smelter Stack, Council Grove, Fort Owen, Traveler's Rest
- Also mentioned were interpretative programs at Salmon Lake and Beavertail Hill (they include historic events, living history, ecology, and other programs to total 12 at each).

Fishing Access Sites: Lee talked about addition of fishing sites, management at existing sites, environmental problems, etc. as follows:

- Upper Clark Fork: Focus area for more fishing sites
- Arco: 10-year management plan
- Bearmouth: 22 acres added to existing site
- Kona Bridge (Lower Clark Fork)
 - o Joint project with Missoula County
 - o Developed in 2008
 - o Incredibly popular
- Bitterroot River: Problems include eroded sites after high water
- Bitterroot North: 2008, Blocked up three other Fishing Access Sites

River Rec. Corridors

- There were 109 permits given out for recreation on the Blackfoot River last year, producing \$26,847 gross revenue. The Blackfoot also held its 6th annual cleanup event in which 139 volunteers participated. 1500 cans, 72 glass bottles and 178 plastic bottles were removed from the river area. Special thanks to Marietta and

Bob Phister for hosting a barbeque for the volunteers and helping with the cleanup. Also thanks to Jeff for all of his help! There were some great pictures of Chet and Aaron removing tires from the river as well.

- Alberton Gorge commercial permits generated \$16,226 gross revenue for the last year. The Gorge started its commercial permits in 1998 and currently has 29 registered outfitters.

Grants Program: The money in the Grants Program goes to funding things like playgrounds and trail systems. Lee listed the different types of top funding for FWP:

- Top Funding:
 - o Vehicle Registration
 - o Park Fees
 - o Motorboat Fuel Tax
 - o Coal Tax
 - o Accommodations Tax
 - o Federal Funds
- Statewide budget is about \$8,000,000. There is no general fund.
- Different possible spending opportunities include new facilities for the Pictograph Cave (Billings) and a remodel at Lone Pine (Kalispell).

Parks Projects (with funding money):

- Placid Lake – paving, boat ramp, docks
- Salmon Lake – day use paving and ramp
- Electric campsites – Salmon, Placid, Beavertail Hill

FAS Projects

- Scotty Brown Bridge
- Russell Gates – The goal this spring is to separate day use parking from camping, bank stabilization projects, and one launch area.
 - o There was a problem with the site being near a bald eagle nest and conflict with cultural resources. Thanks to Mike Thompson and Kristi Dubois for their help with the bald eagle situation!
- Challenges: Human-induced problems occurring at different fishing access sites include vandalism and parties/messy campers. Other problems include fire, flooding, and weeds.

Goals for improving sites/campgrounds/parks include:

- Provide more public access
- Improve disability accessibility
- Continue to be good neighbors
- Engage more volunteers
- Provide more amenities (firewood vending machines and ice in campgrounds)
- Educate and engage kids!

Second Topic: Traveler's Rest, as presented by Loren

Traveler's Rest is the only archaeologically confirmed campsite of Lewis and Clark. It obtained National Historical Land (?) status in 1960. By 1999, Traveler's Rest was one of 11 most endangered historic places according to the NTHP. The park opened to the public for the first time in 2002. In 2006, its acreage was changed from 700 to about 20. This last year included new records for visitation numbers.

- What can you do at Traveler's Rest?
 - o Take a walk through history
 - o Place-based education
 - o Learn about different cultures – tribal engagement
 - *Winter storytelling series – some Native American stories can only be told during certain seasons.
 - o Wildlife viewing – 50+ acres with conservation easement
 - o Other diverse recreation opportunities (hiking, etc.)
 - o Transplant Bitterroots
 - o Volunteer – habitat restoration, visitor interaction
- Holt Museum 2009
 - o There was a new building put in that houses the museum. Education is a big part of Traveler's Rest, bringing in around 3000 kids per year on school field trips.
- Funding: Federal stimulus money for the fiscal years 10 and 11 allows the lease of the visitor's center. There is a need to continue funding, and an opportunity has presented itself in donations in exchange for buying open range land (the price is around \$750,000 - \$800,000). Other sources of revenue include federal funding for the proposed bike trail and parking. Jim Olson suggested talking to TPL because so many funds go to federal projects and the state doesn't see a lot of that money – he said there needs to be a balance.

Third Topic: Milltown/Two Rivers Recreation Facilities and Access (Lee)

There was a grant request submitted for \$2.7 million to develop access opportunities along the Blackfoot and Clark Fork Rivers. Lee showed the board a powerpoint on the Milltown/Two Rivers area that was presented to the Advisory Council. The details are as follows:

- There was a 5+ year community planning/public process to create a design plan for redevelopment at Milltown Dam that was approved by Missoula County Commission in 2008.
 - o It had three main elements:
 - Public Access
 - Recreation Facilities
 - Acquisition of 180 acres
- Sites and their amenities:
 - o Milltown Gateway – tables, benches, picnic pavilions
- Confluence Area
 - o Interpretative Displays
 - o Picnic Tables
 - o Bridge across the Clark Fork to connect with the Kim Williams trail system
 - Public domain enlarged to 180 acres
 - 20 acres along Deer Creek Road
 - Bonner Hill land would go to Bonner School
- Outreach and Management:
 - o 5-year startup period
 - o Site manager/ranger
 - o Maintenance worker

- Conclusion: Remediation, restoration, redevelopment is the key!

Fourth Topic: Blackfoot River Recreation Management Plan and EA

Chet gave a powerpoint presentation on the RRAFT plan as a part of the Blackfoot Rec Management Plan and EA. The outline of his talk is as follow:

- Why is a management plan necessary?
 - o Preservation for recreation opportunities
 - o Blackfoot does not have a comprehensive management plan
 - o To answer concerns expressed over potential resource impacts
- Process – establish citizens advisory committee, also capture impacts on other drainages
- RRAFT (River Recreation Advisory for Tomorrow)
 - o Over 70 applications for membership distributed, 59 received back.
- Role of RRAFT:
 - o Creating the next planning document for the Blackfoot
 - o Providing input on recreation use on other rivers
 - o Coming up with management strategies
- Draft Plan consists of internal review followed by public review, and then the decision document will be finalized in Helena.
 - o Components include an introduction, recreation/resource values, and a recreation management direction.
 - o Management approach includes dividing the river into sections for management, and then determining desired conditions for the river/opportunities people are likely to encounter.
- Key Issues:
 - o Overnight float trips leading to recreation/landowner conflicts and potential resource impact
 - o Appropriate volumes of water for float use and other recreation opportunities

The one question that was raised by the board was if there were any repeated concerns other than those mentioned, and Chet said the biggest issue was data collection. The RRAFT committee had gotten recommendations to make sure they were getting good information in order to make informed decisions. Other concerns included self-registration, ethics and etiquette, better informing of the public, effects of rules and regulations, and Ovando's concerns surrounding the permit system and economic vitality.

Dudley raised the point that the Big Hole River (R3) was running on a new system, and according to a *Montana Standard* survey, 70% of managers say that regulations are really working in that area. He stressed that the RRAFT committee should really keep that in mind, especially with the similarities that exist between the Big Hole and the Blackfoot.

Conclusion: The meeting ended with a few wrap-up questions, as follows.

- Does FWP have a vet service? (Pertaining to the public health concerns with tapeworms infesting humans).
 - o The CDC is the go-to on vet issues. They say that tapeworms are a possibility, but they are not really concerned about it.
- What do you have to do to get tapeworms?

- The CDC says there is really no mechanism – this is why they are not so worked up about it.
- However, some people brought up the point that tapeworm worries go beyond hunter/outdoor recreationists' safety, expressing concern for dogs in the woods.
- As a follow-up to the article in the *Missoulian*, are we going to increase rewards for taking Lake Trout?
 - The answer (from Lee) was that and EIS should be done on it, and we can put it out for public comment.
- Is FWP working with the tribe on Moose harvest?
 - There were issues with overhunting, but they are getting better with the reporting system.
- How are the sheep doing?
 - Mike said we don't really know – Rock Creek is looking decent. He gave a little bit of a summary of the pneumonia deaths seen before Thanksgiving (four in the Bitterroot, Bonner, and Rock Creek).
 - Is there a way of determining connectivity?
 - While some herds don't have the same disease, there are stepping stones between herds, such as Bonner and Lower Rock Creek. Therefore we need to step up people's awareness/FWP awareness in what to look for.
 - Is there a higher outbreak of pneumonia in sheep throughout the U.S. carrying capacity?
 - Mike said Rock Creek was way high. He said that you can have all the range in the world, but if the sheep bunch up and live together, you can't carry very many. He added that lamb survival was key in the East Fork of Rock Creek.
- Jeff ended with some CAC updates. Dan Burns retired. Justin is leaving for Superior in July. Mike Fegely is coming to Missoula. Joe in the Bitterroot is out for a month with pneumonia. Doug Johnson is also out for a month because of shoulder surgery.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, May 11, 2010 at the Missoula FWP HQ.

Minutes approved by:



Lee Bastian, FWP Regional Park Supervisor

3/26/2010

Date